decade or so restricting them, reducing their power, and adopting the method employed for a time under the Han of having the governors of the provinces recommend to the throne men suitable for office—Hung Wu reestablished firmly the civil service examinations and the principle of filling government offices from the successful candidates. Under the Ming, indeed, the examinations acquired an inflexibility—stressing a minute knowledge of the classical books and an artificial literary style—which may have had much to do with discouraging originality among the educated, The Sung dynasty had tended more than the T'ang to confine the state tests to the Confucian Classics. The Ming further regulated and stereotyped the system.

Mindful of his early background, Hung Wu showed some favor to the Buddhist monks, and had executed a high official who protested. He organized them nationally into a hierarchy, but this may well have been for the purpose of facilitating state control of the monasteries.

In spite of his friendliness to the Buddhists, Hung Wu strengthened Confucianism. He showed marked deference to Confucian scholarship; he ordered the establishment of an Empire-wide system of schools in which the basis of instruction was the Confucian Classics; he honored the Hanlin Academy; he preserved the traditional system of state religious observances which were so closely associated with Confucianism; he abolished all the state-awarded titles of the gods except those of Confucius. Under him the Chinese were reacting against the foreign importations and innovations of the Mongols, and were attempting to restore their traditional culture. It is not strange that in the process a conservatism was nourished which made later change

difficult.

POLITICAL HISTORY: YUNG LO

Hung Wu was gathered to his fathers in 1398, at the ripe age of three-score years and ten. He had held the throne for thirty years and had established his family so firmly upon it that they retained it for another two and a half centuries.

Hung Wu's death was followed almost immediately by a struggle over the succession which for about four years plunged the country into civil war. Hung Wu had named as his heir a grandson, Chu Yiin-wen—the son of his deceased oldest son. Only in